

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

We pray every week for the Jewish Friendship Ministry. I suggest our partners pray on November 3 through 9, for Pastor Paulo Orling, leader of the Jewish Adventist ministries in the Curitiba, Brazil. Let's pray for him, for his wife and his team working hard with him.

NEWS

SUKKOTH IN UKRAINE

The "press office" of Beth Shalom, the Jewish Adventist congregation in Kiev, sent us this news about their last celebration of Sukkoth called "From The Day of Atonement to the Kingdom of the Messiah."

"A few days after the Day of Atonement, Sukkot (Tabernacles' Feast) begins to commemorate the ancient Israel living in tents in the desert after the exodus. This is one of three pilgrimage feasts in which people gathered in Jerusalem to rejoice and glorify God for salvation, mercy, harvest, and other blessings.



In the context of joy and gratitude to the Almighty, a meeting dedicated to this feast took place in the community of *Beith Shalom*. During the meeting, guests and members of the community shared joyful memories of God's blessings in their lives this year.

Shelter (Tabernacle) with a roof of willow branches and reeds (in Israel these are palm leaves) and a special bouquet of four plants (*arba'at minim* or *lulav*) mentioned in the Bible served as decoration for the feast and a special visual reminder of God's care: The Bible says: "On the first day you are to take choice fruit of trees [*etrog*], branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees [Myrtle], and willows of the brook, and rejoice before ADONAI your God for seven days." (Leviticus 23:40). These four types of plants symbolize Messiah and God's people united together. Maybe it is worth noting that Sukkot is the only holiday that has not yet been fulfilled in the history of mankind, because it points to eternal salvation and life with Yeshua after the completion of the Universal *Yom Kippur* in the heavenly sanctuary.

FESTIVAL OF JEWISH MUSIC IN KIEV

The annual Festival of Jewish Music will be held in Kiev this year on November 2.

It is an evening of popular Jewish melodies. This event is organized by the *Beit Shalom* congregation (<https://www.facebook.com/Beit.Shalom.SDA.Kyiv/>).

The program includes inspirational, joyful and lyrical songs, touching ancient Jewish prayers and contemporary chants, klezmer melodies that capture the audience with the first chords.

Traditional and contemporary Jewish music will be performed by the Kyiv Chamber Choir, the "Inspiration" children's ensemble, instrumental ensembles and soloists.

This festival will start on November 2, right after Shabbat, at 5:00 pm in the large hall located at 3 street Larissa Rudenko, Kiev. Free entrance.



SUKKOTH IN GUATEMALA

We are happy to announce to our reader that a new Jewish-Adventist ministry is starting in Guatemala, a country where many Jews found refuge when they escaped the Inquisition persecution.



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PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK

NOACH



PARASHA OVERVIEW: GENESIS 6:9-11:32

It is ten generations since the creation of the first human.

Adam's descendants have corrupted the world with immorality, idolatry and robbery, and G-d resolves to bring a flood which will destroy all the earth's inhabitants except for the righteous Noah, his family and sufficient animals to re-populate the earth.

G-d instructs Noah to build an ark. After forty days and nights, the flood covers even the tops of the highest mountains.

After 150 days the water starts to recede. On the 17th day of the 7th month, the ark comes to rest on Mount Ararat.

Noah sends out a raven and then a dove to ascertain if the waters have abated. The dove returns. A week later Noah again sends the dove, which returns the same evening with an olive leaf in its beak.

After another seven days Noah sends the dove once more; the dove does not return.

G-d tells Noah and his family to leave the ark.

Noah brings offerings to G-d from the animals which were carried in the ark for this purpose.

G-d vows never again to flood the entire world and designates the rainbow as a sign of this covenant.

Noah and his descendants are now permitted to slaughter and eat meat, unlike Adam.

According to the Jewish tradition, God commands to Noah and his sons the Seven Universal Laws: The prohibition against Idolatry, Adultery, Theft, Blasphemy, Murder, Eating meat torn from a live animal,

The obligation to set up a legal system.

The world's climate is established as we know it today. Noah plants a vineyard and becomes intoxicated from its produce. Ham, one of Noah's sons, delights in seeing his father drunk and uncovered.

Shem and Yafet, however, manage to cover their father without looking at his nakedness, by walking backwards.

For this incident, Canaan is cursed to be a slave.

The Torah lists the offspring of Noah's three sons from whom the seventy nations of the world are descended.

The Torah records the incident of the Tower of Babel, which results in G-d fragmenting communication into many languages and the dispersal of the nations throughout the world.

The Parasha concludes with the genealogy of Noah to Avram.

THE STORY OF NOAH

We begin here the study of a new parashah or portion of the Torah. The first words of our parashah are *Eleh toldot Noah...* which is translated, "These are the generations of Noah" (Genesis 6:9). This text presents a new development in the story of creation. This parashah is about a "second Adam"—a second man who will be the beginning of a new humanity. That is why this parashah begins in the same manner as the story of the first Adam, with the words *Eleh toldot...* "These are the generations..." (Genesis 2:4).

This is the first parashah called after the name of a biblical character, and we will discover that the character of Noah is central to this Parashah. Noah's name means "rest," however it is also connected to the word *Nachem* which means "to comfort." The Jewish tradition teaches that Noah was a comfort to himself and a comfort to the world, a comfort to his fathers and a comfort to his children, a comfort to celestial beings and to mortals. (Midrash Rabbah, Genesis 30:5). Even though his 120 years of preaching did not result in the saving of anyone except his own family, Noah was a comfort for everyone on the earth.

Although Noah was not formally a member of the people of Israel, he was the ancestor of Abraham and he was part of God's people in his own time.

He is presented from the very beginning as a righteous man: "Noah was a righteous man. He was blameless among his generation. Noah continually walked with God." (Genesis 6:9). Rabbi Nachum of Horodna explains that Noah was born into a pious family. His grandfather was the righteous Methuselah who lived to the age of 969 years, and for whom the flood was delayed until the end of the week of mourning after his death (Midrash Rabba 32:7). As a *tsadik*, Noah was happy to follow in the righteous ways of his family.

NOAH'S FAMILY

In Genesis 6:9, at the beginning of our parashah, Noah is presented alone, without a family; then the next verse says, "Noah had three sons: Shem, Cham and Japheth." (Genesis 6:10). In the previous chapter we learned, "After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Cham and Japheth." (Genesis 5:32). The record shows that Noah's ancestors and contemporaries all started their families at a much younger age; that is why Rabbi Hirsch says, "It seems highly probable that Noah had formerly been afraid to marry and to start a family; he did not believe that he would be able to establish a pure home and raise children who would be *tsadikim* (righteous) and *tamimim* (pure) in an age of *Chamas* (corruption and violence). Only after twenty years had passed since the end of all things had been decreed; only after he had trained himself over a period of 500 years to walk with God without a wife and family of his own—only then did he dare to become the father of children. Even though the Torah gives the three sons of Noah in this way: Shem, Cham and Japheth, the Talmudic tractate affirms that Japheth was the oldest, but Shem is mentioned first because Scripture enumerates them according to their wisdom, not age." (Sanhedrin 69b).

Here we give special mention to the commentary written by Rabbi Hirsch, who comments on the names of Noah's sons, saying, "*Shem* ['name'] is the thinking person, because man's wisdom lies in his ability to understand the nature of a concept or thing and define it—name it, so to speak. *Cham* (from *Chom*, 'heat') is the sensuous, passionate person. *Japheth* (from *Patach*, 'openness') is the seeker after beauty, who is open to external impressions." The Artscroll commentary on Bereishit says that these three characteristics were saved from the flood, and all can be turned to the service of God when guided by the spiritual greatness of a Noah.



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NOAH'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

Noah is a "righteous" and a "blameless" man. The Hebrew word for "righteous" is *tsadik* and for "blameless" is *tamim*. Since Noah is presented in this verse as a *tsadik*, it is interesting to note here the three words coming from the root: צדק they are: *tsadik*, a "righteous" person; *tsedek*, which means "justice;" and *tsedakah*, a word used by Jews for "charity." What make a man a righteous one? According to the sages of Israel, the attributes "just" and "blameless" describe a *tsadik*. Our first duty is to be just, as that is the first meaning of being a *tsadik*. Justice is not something we naturally possess—it is a quality God entrusts to us as a gift of His grace (unmerited favor – Ephesians 2:8). A *tsadik*, amazed by this grace and love of God, respects the *mitsvot* (commandments) between man and his fellow man, the *mitsvot* of morality. According to the Jewish Artscroll commentary "by definition he [Noah] was a man whose life was an unending pattern of justice." (202).

The text says "Noah was a righteous man. He was blameless among his generation." Noah was (*Hayah* in Hebrew). The midrash says, "Whenever this word is used about a person, it means that this person was consistent without deviation, from the beginning of his life to the end." It is not written that Noah was righteous before God, but "before or among his generation." A person can appear righteous in the sight of other people, and yet not be righteous in the sight of God. That means the opinions of human beings are not always true. The meaning of words like "virtue" or "justice" can be distorted by people, who will ascribe them according to their own views. As Rabbi Hirsch put it, "There are times when the Name of God, too, is on everyone's lips, but is emptied of all content through the fault of the generation. That is why the saving of Noah and his family can be seen as an action of grace from God, not something that they deserved by their own righteousness."

The fact that this text says Noah was righteous among his generation teaches us that no one can detach himself from all the influences of his era. The spirit of the times penetrates everywhere, and the members of the generation influence one another. Hence, to be righteous in a generation of wicked people is not a small matter. According to Ramban, Noah feared God and walked in the way God taught him, for he was a prophet.

GOD'S NAME IN GENESIS

The grace of God is also taught by the use of the name of God in Genesis; indeed, the name of God is chosen intentionally. The first chapter of Genesis uses the name *Elohim*—the great God who creates the earth and heaven, while the second chapter uses the holy name of God, *YHWH*—the God who is near to human beings, always ready to help and to save. When this holy name is written in the text of Scripture, it is read in religious service as *Adonai*, and in our current discussion we use Hashem. In Parashat

"The dove could not find any place to rest its feet, and it returned to him, to the ark. There was still water over all the earth's surface. [Noah] stretched out his hand, and brought it to him in the ark." (Genesis 8:9)

Noah, we find the same pattern as in Genesis 1-2: at the beginning of our Parashah, from verse 9 of chapter 6 until the beginning of chapter 7, the name *Elohim* is used; then suddenly chapter 7 begins using the holy name of God, *YHWH*. The name *YHWH* is used 14 times in this Parashah, but not once in chapter 6 where the announcement of God's impending judgment is given.

SALVATION AND LIFE

In chapter 7 we read, "Then Hashem said to Noah, 'Come—you and all your household—into the ark. For you only do I perceive as righteous before Me in this generation.'" (7:1). We are told that God, as Creator, Lawgiver, and Judge of the universe, set apart from the corrupt world the one man and the animals who were to be saved because they had not participated in the general corruption. They were to be saved, not because of their own righteousness, but because of the grace of God. The primary purpose of God's salvation was not to reward righteous people, but it was "to keep alive" (Genesis 6:19)—to save their lives from destruction. Rabbi Hirsch says "the events that now follow are introduced by a reference to God as Adonai, in His attribute of mercy; the One Who educates mankind toward its goal and shapes every coming moment with this goal in mind." The salvation that is revealed in the verses that follow lays the foundation for a new future for mankind. The long-range goal is not only "to keep alive" living creatures but "to keep offspring alive on the face of the whole land." (Gen 7:3).

I, ANOCHI

The compassion of God is seen not only through the use of His Name, but also the use of the personal pronoun "I"—*Ani* or *Anochi* in Hebrew. In our Parashat Noah we read: "For in seven days I *Anochi* will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." (Genesis 7:4). One who reads the text carefully will find a distinction between these two pronouns used by God.

Wherever *Anochi* is written, God does not stand "remote," "confronting" His creatures; but rather positions Himself among them, with love and compassion. *Ani* by contrast, denotes the personality from whom a motion issues forth, who sends something to someone, but Who Himself remains in His place. Compared to the use of the names of God explained previously, we could say that *Ani* corresponds to *Elohim*, and *Anochi* to *Adonai* *YHWH*.

The word *Anach* is the root of the "I" *Anochi*

"He named it Babel, because this was the place where G-d confused the world's language. It was from there that G-d dispersed [humanity] over all the face of the earth." (Genesis 11:9)

used by God. There is profound significance to the use of *Anochi* in these verses. God says to Noah: "I am about to bring death and destruction upon the world, nevertheless, I am God—I have not changed; I continue to act with love and compassion; even today I act as *Anochi*, who embraces everything, bears and abides everything; and the purpose of this harsh decree, too, is for the good of the larger whole." Rabbi Hirsch adds, "This concept is expressed in the books of the prophets by the name of God pronounced as *Elohim*, the attribute of mercy revealing itself as the attribute of justice."

THE COVENANT WITH NOAH

Because of His righteousness, God decided to make a covenant with Noah. The Torah states: "But I will establish My covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you." (Genesis 6:18). The Hebrew word here for "Covenant" is *Brit* which, according to Rabbi Hirsch, is from the root *Barat* which denotes the idea of separation. That is why he affirms that a *brit* is an unconditional promise; it is to be kept, regardless of—even in opposition to—external circumstances. A promise made in a *brit* is an absolute promise: it is cut off from and free of any cause-and-effect connection; it is unconditional. Hence, the establishment of a *brit* is expressing the idea of separating, cutting off, and setting apart.

Rabbi Hirsch adds, "Covenant" is not an adequate term for *brit* because a covenant implies a mutual agreement, whereas a *brit* can be unilateral. Thus God's *brit* with Noah, and His '*berit shalom*' with Pinchas (Numbers 25:12), were created unilaterally by God.

This is the same word, *brit*, that describes the covenant between God and Israel. God made an unconditional covenant with His people.

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS

We know that animals participated in this act of grace and salvation from God. The Torah clearly states the announcement to Noah that animals would come with him: "Of every clean animal you shall take with you seven of each kind, male and female; and of the animals which themselves are not clean, two, male and female;" (Genesis 7:2). How did these animals come to Noah to be rescued? Notice this is the first time the Torah makes this distinction between clean and unclean animals. Rabbi Hirsch notes that the distinction in this verse was not made in connection with Kosher food because "animals were not yet permitted to man as food, and the distinction between 'pure' and 'impure' animals emerged only later, in the Law given at Sinai; nevertheless, man was required to make this distinction—namely in connection with offerings. For the Noahides (Jewish designation of all non-Jews who are descendants of Noah) were permitted and are permitted to offer only pure animals. Thus God's people are permitted to eat only those animals that are fit to be offered by all men. The table and the altar of Noahides and God's people stand at the same level. The reason for the choice of permitted animals must be the same, then, for both." That is why the World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center and its affiliated religious community (Seventh-day Adventists) affirm that the distinction between pure and impure animals applies to everyone, Jews and non-Jews.



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APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

MATTHEW 24:30-44

The time of Noah and the flood was not an easy time. Crimes were committed by everyone everywhere. There were so many evildoers that God made a horrific statement: "God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupted, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth." (Genesis 6:12). That is why God made the most difficult decision he could. God is love, and because of His love, the decision to start a new humanity and to annihilate all the descendants of the first couple, Adam and Havah, was not easy. I am sure, using human language, we can say that God made this decision with tears. The new humanity would begin again with one man, Noah, and his descendants. This is a unique situation, it had never happened before and will never happen after.

Reading the Apostolic Writings, we see that Yeshua, who knew the Tanach (Hebrew Bible) perfectly and quoted it many times, spoke about the time of Noah. In his sermon on the end of time, reported by Mattatyahu (Matthew) who was one of the talmidim of Yeshua, the time of Noah is compared to the last days, right before the coming of Mashiach. "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man." (Matt 24:37-39). Parashat Noah was well known by Yeshua.

However to understand the text, let's look at the context. Yeshua was walking toward the Mount of Olives, close to Jerusalem—so close to Jerusalem that his disciples were contemplating the beautiful city with the magnificent temple. They were very proud of the city of God and its beautiful buildings. Anyone who has gone to Israel and has been on the Mount of Olives looking toward the city of Jerusalem on a beautiful summer afternoon can understand. The disciples were amazed by the view of the Holy City, with the sun shining upon the magnificent temple with its white marble exterior, the temple that had been rebuilt and beautified by Herod the Great during 40 years of renovation and refurbishing. The disciples pointed out to Yeshua the buildings, the amphitheater, the hippodrome, the fortress Antonia, the temple and certainly many other beautiful edifices, but he was not impressed. The text says, "Yeshua left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple." (Matthew 24:1). With sadness Yeshua answered: "Don't you see all these? He responded to them. 'Amen, I tell you, not one stone will be left here on top of another—every one will be torn down!'" (Matthew 24:2). What a surprise for the disciples! For them, this city was so cherished by God that only the end of the world could bring such doom and destruction. They began asking Yeshua when this would happen, and they identified that time with the end of the world: "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3). It is in this context that Yeshua spoke about the time of Noah, comparing the last days to the time of Noah. But when Yeshua described the time of the end with all its disasters, desolations, corruptions and destructions, he opened a small window of hope, saying: "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates." (Matthew 24:32-34). When he said, "From the fig tree learn its lesson," Yeshua was referring to a well-known episode of his ministry, an episode that astonished each one among his audience, and particularly the disciples. Yeshua was walking "And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found noth-

ing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, 'May no fruit ever come from you again!' And the fig tree withered at once. When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, 'How did the fig tree wither at once?'" (Matthew 21:19-21). Israel and the disciples knew well the symbolic meaning of the withering of the fig tree: the fig tree, like the vineyard, represents the people of Israel (Isaiah 5). In the prophets, eating of the fruits of the vine and the fig tree was a sign of prosperity and security. (1 Kings 5:5; 2 Kings 18:31; Is. 34:4; 36:16). The fig tree that withered was a bad omen, possibly announcing that Israel would soon lose her security.

The disciples understood the comparison between the fig tree and the people of Israel. They understood that Yeshua was not happy that Israel did not produce the expected fruits. Yeshua was upset with the fig tree, even though it was not yet the season of producing fruits. And now in this speech about the end of time, he came back to the story of the fig tree to give a new lesson: "From the fig tree learn its lesson." This fig tree will be green again, which means that this fig tree will bear fruit again. And he said: "as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near." If we accept the comparison between the fig tree and Israel, even though Yeshua announced the destruction of Jerusalem, there will be a time when the fig tree (Israel) will turn green again. There is hope for the people of Israel: at the end of time there will be a revival among the Jewish people. That is one of the great lessons Yeshua wanted to give with the story of the fig tree.

Let's remember that in the text of the parashah, Noah was a tsadik—a righteous man among all the corruption and violence of his generation. He succeeded in righteousness by the grace of God, and with the help of God, because he was a man of emunah (faith). Likewise, at the end, among the last generations, even though evil has increased and violence is everywhere, there is hope—there will be people living, who, like Noah, are righteous and will be saved by the grace of God. As long as there is hope the world will continue to exist.

In the letter written to the Hebrews it is said, "By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith." (Heb. 11:7). Noah was not only righteous, but he was also a man of faith. This eleventh chapter of Hebrews was written to illustrate the concept of faith, and presents among others the example of Noah who obeyed when "warned about things not yet seen." That is a good definition of faith: believing God and His word about "things not yet seen" and acting in consequence. As we are in the time described by Yeshua in Matthew chapter 24, an important question arises for each one of us. Are we people of faith who can rely on God in this difficult time? Are we willing to receive the only righteousness which has value before God, righteousness that comes only from the Messiah? If yes, then we are one of the righteous of this generation, waiting for the manifestation of Messiah's glory through his soon return. Yeshua added, "if the master of the house had known what time the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and not let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Matthew 24:43-44). Yeshua is coming back, but nobody knows exactly when. Therefore we need to pray, asking Hashem to help us be ready for that great moment.

HAFTARAH

ISAIAH 54:1 - 55:5

This text of Isaiah is a beautiful text full of promises for Israel and, by extension, to all of God's people. However, we cannot forget that this text of a Hebrew prophet has been addressed first to the people of Israel; that is why the Jewish people have the right to look at this text and the promises included in it as a text addressed directly to them. It is a text that restates God's love for Israel and the unconditional quality of the *brith* (covenant) God has "cut" or established with His people Israel.

Israel must, as a spiritual nation, extend her tents; she is to be a light for the nations and is to dispossess the gods of the nations in order to help all the nations worship the God of Israel. "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch out your tabernacle curtains. Do not hold back—lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right hand and to the left. Your offspring will possess the nations and will resettle the desolate cities." (Isaiah 54:2-3).

Even though God is angry and upset toward Israel, He will call her back and will be her husband and her God forever: "Fear not, for you will not be ashamed. Nor cringe, for you will not be disgraced. For you will forget the reproach of your widowhood no more. For your Maker is your husband—Adonai-Tzva'ot is His Name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer. He will be called God of all the earth. 'For Adonai has called you back like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of one's youth that is rejected,' says your God. 'For a brief moment I deserted you, but I will regather you with great compassion.'" (Isaiah 54:4-7). To give reassurance that He will not revoke His covenant with Israel, God reminds Israel of His covenant with Noah. "For this is like the waters of Noah to Me: for as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more cover the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, nor will I rebuke you." (Isaiah 54:9).

The mention of the covenant with Noah is interesting. As the covenant with Noah is still valid, the covenant with Israel is also still valid and will remain valid until the end. Even if God contracts a new covenant, that does not invalidate the ancient covenant: "Though the mountains depart and the hills be shaken, My love will not depart from you, nor will My covenant of peace be shaken, says Adonai who has compassion on you." (Isaiah 54:10). That is why we can be sure that God loves Israel today. As described by Rabbi Shaul: "Concerning the Good News, they are hostile for your sake; but concerning chosenness, they are loved on account of the fathers—for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." (Romans 11:28-29).

Isaiah closes his chapter by again assuring a bright future for God's people Israel as described in the first part of this chapter 54: "No weapon formed against you will prosper and you will condemn every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of Adonai's servants—their vindication is from Me." It is a declaration of Adonai." (Isaiah 54:17).

There will be a "new covenant," but this new covenant is an extension of, not a rejection or rebuke of, the former covenant. As the prophet Jeremiah announced about this "new covenant," it is a covenant made with the house of Israel, not with Gentiles: "Behold, days are coming"—it is a declaration of Adonai—"when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—" (Jeremiah 31:30). Both the "house of Israel" and the "house of Judah" are mentioned here. Nobody can say that the house of Israel is lost among the Gentiles and therefore this text is about the Gentiles. No, this new covenant is also with the house of Judah.

The characteristics of this "new covenant" are interesting. As it is written, the people of God will not be taught by rabbis anymore, but by God Himself: "All your children will be taught by Adonai. Your children will have great shalom." (Isaiah 54:13).

STORIES AND TRADITIONS

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Karcha gave the following parable; "A man prepared a beautiful "Chupah" (canopy) for his son's wedding. But, unfortunately, the son died before it could be used. The man dismantled the canopy saying, "I have prepared this for my son. Now that he is here no more I have no use for it..." So too was with the Flood. G-d said, "I have created all living beings for mankind. Now that he will be destroyed I have no use for anything which was created for him." Thus, we see the great responsibility mankind carries not only for oneself, not only for humans, but also for all living creatures!

WHAT DO WE DO FOR OTHERS?

Our sages explain the difference between Noah and Abraham with the following parable: Many people were sitting in a very cold room. Two of the people decided they couldn't stand it any more. One person went and put on his fur coat. Although he was now comfortable, everyone else was still freezing. The other person decided to get wood and make a fire. He not only warmed himself, but everyone else in the room too.

Noah was similar to the first person, while Abraham was the second one. Noah was indeed righteous and as a result he was saved. Abraham, however, prayed for the cities of Sodom and Gomorra to be spared.

The lesson in this is that when someone else is in need of spiritual or physical help and guidance, we must be of help. For in the end, we are all responsible for the welfare of each other.

KING OF KINGS

Many years ago, one of the cities in France passed a bad decree against the Jews. The Jewish community asked their rabbi to intercede with the king.

While at the palace waiting to be ushered into the king's chamber, the rabbi realized that it would soon be night. So he began the Mincha prayer, which must be recited before nightfall.

In the middle of prayer, he was told that the king would see him now. But he continued praying.

The king was furious. His aid told the rab-

"In the 601st year [of Noah's life], in the first [month], on the first of the month, the land was drained off and Noah removed the ark's hatch. He saw that the land's surface was beginning to dry. By the second month, on the 27th day of the month, the land was completely dry." (Genesis 8:13,14)

bi that if he didn't come right away, the king would not see him at all. Just then the rabbi finished his prayer and followed the aid to the king's chamber.

"How dare you ignore me when I called for you?" the king demanded.

"It is true that your excellency is my king and I must honor and respect you," answered the rabbi. "But at the time you called, I was praying to G-d who is the King over all kings. It would have been very disrespectful to Him if I would have interrupted my prayer." The answer impressed the king and he granted the rabbi's request on behalf of his people.

ENJOYING STUDYING TORAH

Rabbi was seeking someone to instruct his young son in the wisdom of Torah. He finally found a young man who had a good reputation as a teacher. After interviewing him, the Rabbi was satisfied with his abilities. "But before I hire you," the Rabbi said, "I have to ask you one final question: Do you yourself enjoy studying Torah?"

"What difference does it make?" asked the young man. "As long as I sincerely want your son to study and will make every effort to teach him, I should be qualified for the job!"

"You are mistaken!" the Rabbi replied. "A teacher transmits whatever he enjoys. If you enjoy studying Torah, then you will transmit this feeling and my son, too, will enjoy studying. However, if your goal is only that my son should learn and grow up to be a scholar, then all he will learn from you is that he, too, will enjoy when someone else studies!"

G-D'S IMAGE

The Alter from Kelm once remarked that Darwin was able to formulate his theory of evolution only because he had never seen a real human being. Thus he could view men as no more than smarter monkeys. "Had he seen my teacher, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, who developed his character traits to a degree of perfection that fully expressed the essence of the Divine Image, he never could have entertained the possibility that human beings evolved from monkeys," said the Alter.



INSPIRATIONAL CORNER

But apart from Bible history, geology can prove nothing. Those who reason so confidently upon its discoveries, have no adequate conception of the size of men, animals, and trees before the flood, or of the great changes which then took place. Relics found in the earth do give evidence of conditions differing in many respects from the present; but the time when these conditions existed can be learned only from the Inspired Record. In the history of the flood, inspiration has explained that which geology alone could never fathom. In the days of Noah, men, animals, and trees, many times larger than now exist, were buried, and thus preserved as an evidence to later generations that the antediluvians perished by a flood. God designed that the discovery of these things should establish faith in inspired history; but men, with their vain reasoning, fall into the same error as did the people before the flood,—the things which God gave them as a benefit, they turn into a curse by making a wrong use of them. (CE 191)